

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

Claim 1:

1. A method of operating a Visual Basic program comprising;
- capturing data from an Excel spreadsheet program data file, wherein said data is organized by lines, and wherein a set of lines contains all information needed for producing a single signal line or a header/format line, and wherein there is a multiplicity of sets of lines in a said Excel spreadsheet program data file, said capturing including,
- for each set of lines of said data file information unique to a particular signal line intended to be displayed, capturing, from said Excel spreadsheet program data file by communication of a Visual Basic procedure within said Visual Basic program with said Excel spreadsheet program, said data file information,
- interpreting in said Visual Basic procedure said data file information from said set of lines in accord with a command from within said set of lines,
- preparing said data file information in accord with said command in said Visual Basic procedure to instruct an instance of a Visio program to draw a signal line or a header/format line in accord with said command from within said set of lines,
- operating an instance of a Visio program to provide a display file containing each said particular signal line and header/format line in accord with said captured data interpreted through said command from within said set of lines pertaining to each said signal line or header/format line by
- sending to said instance of Visio a command and data parameters corresponding with each said set of lines together with said command for each said set of lines so that said instance of Visio can produce a .vsd file containing sufficient information for Visio to print or display a timing chart having each signal line and header/format line incorporated therein.

Claim 2:

- 1 2. The method of Claim 1 wherein said sets of lines of said data file are read in order
2 from one end of the data file to the opposite end of said data file and pro.

Claim 3:

- 1 3. The method of Claim 2 wherein the one end is a top and the opposite end is a
2 bottom as said data file may be displayed by using Excel.

Claim 4:

- 1 4. A method of operating a control program for drawing a timing chart from a
2 spreadsheet data file employing a drawing program comprising, upon initiation of said
3 control program;
4 said control program captures data from said spreadsheet data file,
5 said control program sends commands based on said captured data to said
6 drawing program, wherein said captured data contains commands for each line of a
7 timing chart,
8 said control program interprets said commands for identifying drawing actions
9 to be accomplished by said drawing program and wherein said control program
10 commands said drawing program in conformity with said commands.

Claim 5:

- 1 5. The method of Claim 4 further comprising;
2 said step of capturing data from said spreadsheet file is executed by
3 requesting each line of data from said spreadsheet file from a spreadsheet program
4 which is actively running.

Claim 6:

- 1 6. The method of Claim 4 further comprising;
2 in said step of said control program commanding said drawing program in
3 conformity with said commands, said drawing program produces a display modified
4 by substantially each command.

Claim 7:

- 1 7. The method of Claim 5 wherein a user initiates use of said control program and
2 supplies the spreadsheet data file name to said control program.

Claim 8:

- 1 8. The method of Claim 7 wherein a user prior to initiating use of said control program
2 populates said spreadsheet data file having said spreadsheet data file name with timing
3 chart data.

Claim 9:

- 1 9. The method of Claim 7 wherein said step of populating said spreadsheet data file
2 having said spreadsheet data file name is accomplished in part using a graphic user
3 interface operating on said spreadsheet program.

Claim 10:

- 1 10. An apparatus for drawing a timing chart based upon data and commands in a
2 spreadsheet data file comprising:
3 a software program containing a procedure for capturing data from said
4 spreadsheet data file including a set of subroutines for interpreting said commands
5 and a subroutine for sending said interpreted commands to a drawing program
6 together with any associated datums within said data.

Claim 11:

- 1 11. An apparatus as set forth in Claim 10 wherein said software program is written in
2 Visual Basic.

Claim 12:

- 1 12. An apparatus as set forth in Claim 11 wherein said Visual Basic program subroutine
2 for capturing said data and commands from said spreadsheet data file comprises a routine
3 for requesting a row of data from a spreadsheet program.

Claim 13:

- 1 13. An apparatus as set forth in Claim 12 wherein said routine for requesting a row of
2 data from said spreadsheet program contains a command that can be submitted to and is
3 interpretable by Excel.

Claim 14:

- 1 14. An apparatus as set forth in Claim 12 wherein said subroutine for sending said
2 interpreted commands to a drawing program together with any associated datums within
3 said data contains a command interpretable by Visio.

Claim 15:

- 1 15. An apparatus as set forth in Claim 10 wherein said subroutine for sending said
2 interpreted commands to a drawing program together with any associated datums within
3 said data contains a command interpretable by Visio.

Claim 16:

- 1 16. An apparatus as set forth in Claim 10 wherein said apparatus comprises electronic
2 signals within a computer memory.

Claim 17:

- 1 17. An apparatus as set forth in Claim 16 wherein said computer memory is a
2 transportable disk.

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